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Jury begged not to let Buckley 'punish and destroy' Spotlight STAT

By George Archibald
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Liberty Lobby attorney Mark Lane ended his defense against a \$16 million libel action yesterday with a plea to the all-black jury to protect continued publication of the organization's weekly, Spotlight.

Mr. Lane accused National Review magazine and its conservative editor, William F. Buckley Jr., plaintiffs in the lawsuit, of pursuing a mission "to punish and destroy" Spotlight because the publication disagreed with Mr. Buckley's conservatism.

"This is an effort to close down one view that is different from Mr. Buckley's view" — particularly Liberty Lobby's opposition to Israel and support for controversial Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, Mr. Lane said in his closing arguments.

"Do not allow an independent voice that is a little different to be stifled," he urged the jury, which today begins its deliberations in the 6-year-old case.

Spotlight had engaged in "malicious and outrageous" journalism by knowingly printing "vicious lies" about Mr. Buckley and his magazine, said National Review attorney J. Daniel Mahoney.

U.S. District Judge Joyce Hens Green has already ruled in a pre-trial order that Spotlight libeled National Review in two of four counts in the defamation case.

The falsehoods included Liberty Lobby's charge that National Review had promoted the right of "militant sex deviates to molest small children" by publishing both sides of the homosexual rights debate, according to the judge's order.

Also ruled as defamatory was Spotlight's repeated claim that National Review had surrendered its editorial independence to "Zionist financial power" through a deal with the Anti-Defamation League in order to bolster the magazine's circulation.

Also before the jury is Spotlight's accusation that Mr. Buckley had "a close working relationship" with George Lincoln Rockwell, founder of the American Nazi Party.

A fourth count is Spotlight's claim that Mr. Buckley collaborated with Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League and, according to Spotlight, a man "who often posed as a 'Nazi' and 'KKK' sympathizer" to publish "a muddled smear" of Liberty Lobby founder Willis A. Carto in National Review.

"If there was ever a case to deter this campaign of lying and vilification, this is that case," Mr. Mahoney said.

The attacks "cut to the heart of the reputation of any journal of opinion," he told the jury. The magazine would be "in deep trouble" if Spotlight's estimated 135,000 to 300,000 readers believed the statements, he said.

Mr. Mahoney asked the jury for "an appropriate and substantial sum in punitive damages and nominal

compensatory damages for all these vicious lies they have been spreading about National Review throughout this country." He suggested that the magazine's attorneys fees to date, amounting to \$261,892, would be "an appropriate benchmark" for deciding the amount of the award.

In his summation yesterday, Mr. Lane said National Review had provoked Spotlight's attacks with "a smear" against Mr. Carto in 1971, following Liberty Lobby's vigorous opposition to U.S. action in Vietnam.

He accused Mr. Buckley of working with E. Howard Hunt, convicted Watergate conspirator, "to put Spotlight out of business." Hunt was Mr. Buckley's supervisor when he worked briefly for the CIA in Mexico City during the early 1950s, according to testimony in the present trial.